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AFRICAN CRISIS RESPONSE INITIATIVE (ACRI)

Background: ACRI is a State managed, defense supported training initiative intended to enhance the capacity of selected African militaries to respond effectively to peacekeeping or humanitarian relief operations on the continent. ACRI's emphasis is on training based on a common peacekeeping doctrine and the supply of interoperable communications equipment, which will enable the units to work together more effectively.

ACRI's long-term objective is to train up to 12,000 military personnel. Deployment of ACRI-trained troops is a sovereign decision of the ACRI partner in response to a request from international political entities such as the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity or a sub-regional organization such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). ACRI-trained troops could also deploy as part of a multinational coalition force for peacekeeping.

Summary Training Plan and Program: From July 1997 to the present, ACRI has conducted battalion initial training in Senegal, Uganda, Malawi, Mali, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Benin. Initial training is scheduled for October 2000 in Kenya. ACRI has conducted battalion follow-on training for Senegal, Ghana, Uganda, Malawi and Mali. Future follow-on training is scheduled for all ACRI partner nations. Initial and follow-on training in Ethiopia has been deferred until resolution of the Ethiopian/Eritrean conflict. (follow-on training in Uganda and Cote d' Ivoire has been placed on hold due to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in the case of the former, and a coup, the case of the latter). To date, ACRI has provided training and non-lethal equipment to almost 6,000 peacekeepers from seven African militaries. The initial brigade staff training began in Senegal during October 2000 with Kenya to follow in April of 2001.

During initial battalion training, U.S. Army instructors train African soldiers in highly professional interoperable program of instruction in peacekeeping and humanitarian relief operations. The ACRI program -- for both initial and follow-on training -- exposes the host military to the full range of peacekeeping tasks, from convoy escort, logistics, and protection of refugees, to negotiations and command and control. ACRI has increased both the level and character of involvement of non-governmental, private voluntary and international organizations in ACRI training in order to increase African peacekeepers' capacity to respond to complex humanitarian emergencies. A series of four follow-on events offer a mix of commuter assisted exercises, refresher as well as battalion staff training activities.

ACRI has already contributed to conflict resolution in Africa, where several partner countries have made a sovereign decision to deploy peacekeepers in international operations. For example, an ACRI-trained battalion from Mali recently deployed to Sierra Leone as part of the ECOWAS peacekeeping force; soldiers from Ghana are also involved in this operation. In addition, ACRI-trained troops from Benin are deployed as a part of an ECOWAS-approved peacekeeping force in Guinea-Bissau and Senegalese soldiers are engaged under the UN mission in the Central African Republic.

ACRI Funding: In support of the program's objectives to encourage broad-based peacekeeping cooperation throughout Africa, ACRI has expended \$15 million in FY 1997 and \$22 million in FY 1998. ACRI will expend approximately \$18 million for FY 1999, \$20 million for FY 2000 and FY 2001 and has requested an additional \$20 million for FY 2002.

ACRI Future: As part of a comprehensive policy review undertaken by the ASD for International Security Affairs, ISA/AFR has worked on a transition plan graduating the program into a viable security tool for the USG. Currently the DASD for Africa and the A/S of State for Africa are working toward an organizational change for ACRI that will meet the objectives of both departments.